DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 156 590 SO 010 996

AUTHOR Prince, J. D., Sr.
TITLE Does a High School Education Free the Graduate of Family Influence upon Potential Social Class?
INSTITUTION Tupelo Public Schools, Miss.
PUB DATE Nov 77
NOTE 22p.; Appendices on pages 15-19 may not reproduce clearly due to poor reproducibility of original document

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Educational Research; Family Influence; *Family Role; *High School Role; Public Education; *School Role; Social Class; Social Influences; *Social Mobility; Social Status; *Socioeconomic Influences

ABSTRACT

The hypothesis of this study is that education will free an individual to move from one social stratum to another. The population studied consisted of a selected sample of 357 graduates of the 1976 class of Tupelo High School in Mississippi. A personal interview using a 19 question form was conducted with each member of the class. A detailed study of each pupil's high school records was completed. If the student had entered college, a transcript of the first year's college work was obtained. If the student was employed, his or her immediate supervisor was asked to fill out a standard from indicating the graduate's performance on the job. The study shows that the high school experience does not necessarily free the student from the effect of family placement in class structure. There is a high similarity between the class of family and choice of postgraduate activity of the Tupelo High School graduates of the class of 1976. Nearly 72% of the activities entered into by the sample students will lead them back to the same social class as that of their family. Based on this study the authors accept Lawrence A. Cremin's statement that "social mobility is more likely to be dominated by family influences than by those generated in any educational institution." (Author/RM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED156590

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Julian D. Prince

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

DOES A HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION FREE THE GRADUATE OF FAMILY INFLUENCE UPON POTENTIAL SOCIAL CLASS?

Tupelo Public Schools, Miss.

J. D. Prince, Sr.
Spring Semester, 1978

SO 010 996

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE	1
Statement of the Problem	2
Hypothesis	2
Test of the Hypothesis	3
Assumptions	3
METHODS AND PROCEDURES	4
Subjects of the Study	4
Identification of Social Class	4
Selection of Sample	7
Identification of Class of Family and Graduate	9
FINDINGS	10
Characteristics of the Sample Population	10
CONCLUSIONS	12
POSTSCRIPT	13
BIBLIOGRAPHY	14
ADDENDA	15

INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

Will education free an individual to move from one social stratum to another? The argument for this position has been one for the development of a universal, free American public school program. The truth of this issue has been debated for some period of time. Recent writings on this topic leave one less than illuminated about the efficacy of education as a vehicle for social mobility.

James S. Coleman's report on Equality of Educational Opportunity (1966) did indeed suggest that the effects of schooling were less potent and less uniform than had traditionally been assumed. As Lawrence A. Cremin in Public Education (1976) states, "[Coleman's] data did not indicate, however, that the school had no power, but rather that it was educating sequentially and synchronically along with other institutions and that its effect on different individuals was partly deperdent upon what happened to them in those other institutions."

Christopher Jencks, writing in his study, Equality: A Reassessment of the Effects of Family in Schooling in America (1972), gives a clear impression that the school has little influence in affecting social mobility. Again, Cremin (1976), ". . . the real message of the Coleman and Jencks studies of equal educational opportunity, [is] not that the school is powerless but that the family is powerful." Cremin's inference here is that one is most likely to find that social mobility is more likely to be dominated by family influences than by those generated in any educational institution.

Cremin's thesis seemed to be an interesting one to test. The author of this paper was aware that the Tupelo Public Schools had in hand raw data from the graduating class of 1976 of Tupelo High School which was of sufficient detail to allow an examination of this thesis. In the fall of 1976, George McLean of the Tupelo Daily Journal had made funds available to allow Tupelo Public Schools to employ an investigator to follow each member of the graduating class of '76 into their post high school life. The purpose of the survey was to determine if the high school had properly prepared students for the world of work and for education beyond the high school level.

Recognizing that Cremin's contention that parental influences are greater than educational influences in determining social mobility, we believed that this hypothesis could be submitted to test using data available in the central office of Tupelo Public Schools.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study is to determine whether a group of Tupelo High School graduates of the class of 1976 make post high school college or vocational choices which have the likelihood of eventually resulting in a significant change in the social status of the class members from that of their parents.

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis is offered: If a high school education has a profound effect on social mobility, this effect will be so pervasive that there will be no significant statistical relationship found between the social status of post high school activity chosen by high school

graduates as compared to the social status of the family from which the student originated.

Test of the Hypothesis

We may reject our major hypothesis if we are able to reject these two lower-order hypotheses:

1. A linear regression comparing graduate status to family status would not be statistically significant as the correlation between the status of the student choice and that of the family status would be low enough to fall within the area of probability allowed by chance occurrence.

2. The population distributions of "family class" and "student class" will be found to be different to a statistically significant degree.

Assumptions

Several assumptions had to be made in testing the hypothesis involved in the research:

1. That we could convert our data on both family and pupil post-high school activity to a numerical form which could then be tested for statistical significance.

2. That we could use commonly accepted criteria for determining social class of the graduate's family.

3. That the type of employment chosen by the working graduate or the type of educational training selected by the student could be utilized to project the future social class stratum of the graduate when taken in the context of such items as student mental ability, high school grades, ratings of employers, college freshman grades, and related activities entered into after high school graduation.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Subjects of the Study: The population for this study consisted of 357 graduates of the class of 1976 of Tupelo (MS) High School.

The first phase of this study was completed in the summer of 1977 when a large percent of the members of the class had been located and surveyed. For each member of the class surveyed, the following activities were undertaken: (1) a personal interview was conducted using a 19-question form asking the same information of each graduate; (2) a detailed work-up on each pupil's high school records was completed which included activities in school, subjects taken, ability test scores and grades in selected subjects; (3) if the student entered college, a transcript of the first year's work in college was obtained (where allowed by the student); (4) if the student was employed, the immediate supervisor on the job was surveyed, using a standard form, which form asked a number of specific questions about the graduate's performance on the job.

Identification of Social Class

A six-level social strata scale was chosen for the experiment. Divisions were (I) upper-upper, (II) lower-upper, (III) upper-middle, (IV) lower-middle, (V) upper-lower and (VI) lower-lower. Identifying characteristics of these divisions were partially subjective on the part of the author and partially based on commonly accepted sociological criteria.

Hollingshead (1949) was used to refine our criteria. The class of each student's family was identified by the following characteristics:

CLASS I. Wealth and lineage are combined through the economic, legal and family systems in such a manner that membership in Class I is more or less stabilized from one generation to another. Males active on boards of directors of community organizations, well educated, recognized as a community leader, generally recognized as being at peak of power pyramid, residence in area of community commonly identified as "socially prestigious."

CLASS II. Generally wealthy, upwardly mobile, achieving positions through own efforts, origins well known though not enough time has elapsed to allow them to be members of Class I families. In Tupelo these individuals are accepted into all upper social strata levels of community, residence in area of community commonly identified as prestigious, active in civic and religious organizations.

CLASS III. Professionals, diploma elite, class determined by housing patterns in higher income areas, upper-level professional employment, social circles into which the individual is admitted, often new residents, often active as heads of civic organizations or drive chairman of various charitable organizations.

CLASS IV. Small-business people, lower-level management personnel of banks and larger industrial firms, teachers and upper-level clerical personnel. Generally recognized as being professionals, college educated in many instances, but not normally accepted into upper social levels, nor seeking same. Housing in middle-class neighborhood, often in newer residential subdivisions.

CLASS V. Working class people who make an adequate living. Lower income, but productive workers. Homeowners of modest dwellings, most often with stable family life. High school education, generally uppermost educational level. Active in small church organizations.

CLASS VI. Chronically unemployed or under-employed. Job transient, unstable life existence. Poor credit risk. Housing of poor quality. Little community involvement.

Categories to identify levels for pupils are substantially more subjective. In the absence of normally accepted criteria for classifying potential class placement based on choice of post-high school activity by high school graduates, we have arbitrarily identified several characteristics as having the capability of indicating potential social class. These ratings are also modified by the subjective judgment of the author. Entering this decision are such items as I.Q. score, rating given by the employer or college grades as indicators of eventual success.

CLASS I. Open only to students from Class I families. Prestigious senior college, membership in fraternity or sorority of exclusive nature, course selection in liberal arts, fine arts or business or professional choice of parent.

CLASS II. Student from Class II family who chooses senior college, fraternity or sorority, course work leading towards profession of parent, fine arts or business management (banking, law). Drop to Class III if grades and attitude weak.

CLASS III. Senior college, membership in sorority or fraternity, college selection which would lead graduate towards profession or potential

upper-management position. Move to Class II if family already Class III in Tupelo and upper profession (medicine, law, banking) chosen by able and aggressive student.

CLASS IV. Senior or junior college course of study which could lead to professional job status similar to that of Class IV adult, lack of membership in college fraternal organization. Stability indicated by trade or technical training which would lead individual into parent's small-business operation. Low ability, poor college grades, poor employee rating drop to Class V from Class IV family status.

CLASS V. Choice of junior college, course of study or trade or technical course of study which would, at best, produce a working class position, or a choice of a job which would produce steady income but small likelihood of advancement into management position. High ability Class VI with good attitude advance to this class.

CLASS VI. Unemployed or in low-order position requiring only unskilled or semi-skilled labor only for successful maintenance of job position.

Selection of Sample

The original intent was to use a random sample of the 357 graduates for the study. The technique for choosing a random sample was attempted. This proved to be difficult in practice. Eventually, the sample chosen for this study met the criteria listed in the flow chart below. Often several choices would be made and replaced before an individual with a complete data file was located. This eventually became a sample limited by availability of data. A sample of 103 members of the 357

class members was chosen. In our mind, there is some suspicion as to the true random nature of the sample. Some bias can be attributed because of the nature of those who were willing to cooperate in completion of the data forms.

The flow chart for selecting individuals for the sample was as follows:

1. Student name is selected from table of random numbers. Was student located and surveyed? If so, continue.

2. The address is checked. If the address is within Tupelo city limits, continue.

3. The parent's name is then checked. If it is in the 1977 city directory, continue.

4. The sex, educational level and race of the head of household is determined. The place of employment of the head of household is determined, as is the type of employment and place of residence. If all of the above information is available, continue.

5. The sex of the student is then determined. Is there an I.Q. score? Continue.

6. Determine the average grade for the high school years. Information available, continue.

7. Determine the institution the graduate is attending, or if the graduate is employed, the name of the place of employment. Continue.

8. If in college, is freshman transcipt available? If so, continue.

9. If employed, is employer interview present? If so, continue.

10. If all data is available, enter at appropriate point on data sheet.

Identification of Class of Family and Graduate

Using data collected, each family is assigned a class code of I-VI as outlined on page 4. Each graduate is also assigned a potential class code--also of I-VI.

A serious flaw in the judgment of potential social class has been found in the subjectivity to which the author must resort to make these decisions. The very nature of the projection process required a perusal of such items as the college transcript, employer's evaluation (see Addenda for the evaluation sheets of a typical graduate to get an idea of data used in evaluation), high school and college grades, mental ability, indications of stability on job and class status of family.

Class levels for family and student were estimated and tabulated.

FINDINGS

Characteristics of the sample population:

1. The distribution of the sample by race and sex show a reasonable relationship to that of the total population of 357. Our sample shows: Negro-male, 6 (5.8%); Negro-female, 7 (6.7%); Caucasian-male, 45 (43.6%); Caucasian-female, 45 (43.6%). These percentages are in agrement with the percentages of the total graduates: C-85.7%, N-14.3%.

2. The distribution of families by class is: I - 1; II - 4; III - 17; IV - 38; V - 36; VI - 7.

3. The distribution of graduate potential class by post graduate choice of activity is: I - 1; II - 4; III - 14; IV - 38; V - 41; VI - 5.

4. A matrix shows the relationship between post graduate activity and family class.

F							
A	I						1
M	II				3	1	
I	III			4	10	3	
L	IV		7	30	1		
Y	V	2	30	4			
	VI	3	4				
		VI	V	IV	III	II	I

GRADUATE

5. An analysis of the data:

   a. Linear regression (analysis of 103 pairs). Using a linear regression, we find that the relationship of the 103 pairs produces a correlation of 0.847 (r). R^2 is 0.719. IMPLICATION: the class of the family predicts 71.8% of the predicted post high school class of the students of the class of 1976 with a probability which exceeds 0.01. We are not able to reject the first hypothesis as stated.

b. An analysis using the T-Test. Using Student's t-Distribution shows a t value of 0.285 for the two populations. The inference is that the two populations are quite similar in distribution. In this case, $p > 0.001$ that they are statistically similar. INFERENCE: We are not able to reject the second hypothesis as stated

CONCLUSIONS

We were not able to reject the null hypotheses as stated. This is not an unexpected result. Despite the failure to reject, we are able to support Cremin's contention to an extent. We are able to state that our study shows that the high school experience does not necessarily free the student from the effect of family placement in class structure. In fact, we can assure ourselves that there is a high similarity between class of family and choice of post-graduate activity of our THS graduates of the class of 1976. Nearly 72 percent of the activities entered into by our sample students will lead them back to the same social class as that of their family. We are not able to say that the family unit is the cause of these choices or that the experience of some single individual may be significantly altered by the educational experience, but we can say that the high school diploma, per se, does not immediately free the student to make choices which are independent of family status in the community.

Based on this study we must accept Cremin's contention as stated earlier, ". . . social mobility is more likely to be dominated by family influences than by those generated in any [Read: Tupelo High School] educational institution."

POSTSCRIPT

There are several findings of interest which, though not entering into the work above, may be instructive.

1. College education by family social class I - 100%, II - 100%, III - 84.4%, IV - 72.2%, V - 30.6%, VI - 16.6%.

2. Senior college by social class of family: I - 100%, II - 100%, III - 76.5%, IV - 39.4%, V - 11.7% and VI - 0%.

3. Full-time work after high school: I - 0%, II - 0%, III - 15.6%, IV - 21.1%, V - 65.7%, VI - 42.8% (several students work full time and attend college).

4. The only group with an unemployed member was VI with 28.5% unemployed at the time of the survey.

5. Inspection of cases shows that intelligence and high school G.P.A. have little effect on student choice of post-high school activity.

6. Choice of student activity correlates with parent occupation by 0.697 (i.e., predicts that 48% of student choice will be in same occupational group as parent).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Coleman, J. S., et. al. Equality of Educational Opportunity. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Office of Education, 1966.

Cremin, L. A. Public Education. New York: Basic Book, 1976.

Hollingshead, A. B. Elmtown's Youth: The Impact of Social Class on Adolescents. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1949.

Jencks, C., et. al. Inequality: A reassessment of the effect of family and schooling in America. New York: Basic Books, 1972.

TUPELO HIGH SCHOOL

FOLLOW-UP STUDY

NAME CLASS 1 FEMALE #316

CLASS 1976 RACE W SEX F 15

I. Intelligence Test

Test	Grade Level	CA	MA	IQ/ Ability	Raw Score	
Otis Quick Scor.	4			133		
Otis Short	7	12.8		147		
SETHA	9	13.11		136	163	
		Verb.	Math.	Qual	Tot	TOT
SAT	12	58	66	59	58	57
PSAT/NMSQT	11	52	60	Verbal	160	

II. Achievement Test Scores

Composite	NEDT 34	NAT'L MERIT 81	ACT 30	CAT	
English	44	87	30	12 Grade	9
Math	39	95	29	85	324
Social Studies	34		29	NP	99
Natural Science	39		31		
Word Usage	32				

III. Academic Grades

Grade Level :	9	10	11	12
English	A+	H	H	H
Math	A+	H	H	H
Social Studies	A+	H	H	H
Natural Science	A+	H	H	H

NAME # 346 [illegible] CONTACT PERSON FATHER

ADDRESS 2106 Daugherty TELEPHONE 842-5743

1. Number of years experience in:

2. ____ Album/Newspaper ____ Band 3 Student Council

3 Athletics 3 Clubs ____ Other

3. What is the highest educational level of your parents:

Mother B.S. degree Father B.S. degree

4. Are you employed ____ Yes ✓ No

5. If yes, where ____

6. What is your job title? ____

7. What is your salary? ____ 5,000-10,000 ____ 10,000-15,000 ____ Above

8. Marital Status single

9. Do you have any children ✓ No, ____ Yes, How Many? ____

10. If you have had post high school education, what catagory describes you?

college student Major Field of Study Architecture at Univ. of Illenois for one semester

Trade, Vocational Technical, or Business School:

How long have you been in the program? ____

Degree or Certificate Earned ____

11. Are you a member of any religious, social or civic organization? No ____

Yes: ✓ List VIP (Volunteer Alini Projects), member AIA (freshman honorary), Kappa Delta sorority member Alpha Tau Omega little sister

12. Are you a registered voter? ✓ Yes ____ No

13. Did you vote in the last election? ✓ Yes ____ No

14. If yes, indicate which level(s): ✓ Local ✓ State ✓ National

Tupelo High School Follow-Up Study -- Page 2

Name # 346

15. What high school courses/experiences were valuable to you?

✓ Math	✓ English/Speech	___ Home Economics/Ind.Arts
___ Science	___ Foreign Language	___ Guidance & Counseling
___ Business	✓ Social Studies	✓ Teachers
___ Athletics	✓ Student Activities	✓ Administrators
✓ Music/Art	___ Career Programs	___ Other ___ (State experience)
___ Vocational	✓ Peer Groups	

COMMENTS:

1. What is the best thing you know about Tupelo Schools?
the opportunity for student involvement in various activities
for example my student council work, short term tennis, teaching
also, the friendly relationships that can exist between a student and the faculty
2. If you could improve on part of Tupelo High School what would you recommend?
I think THS needs more and better career counseling. I also wish THS had some kind of program that helped prepare college-bound students for college studying and work habits (to improve study habits).
3. Do you think you are adequately prepared?
Yes, I feel I am well-prepared for just about anything that lies ahead of me. The only area so far that I don't think I was really prepared for was the way of knowing how to study like and to do so good for.
4. Who was your favorite high school teacher?
Mickey Murphy
(This is an unfair question. There are many!)
5. How do you think you compare with students from other high schools?
I feel that my high school background is quite good. I really appreciate the opportunities that were available to me, and I feel I benefited greatly from my involvement. I wish I could have had more upper level courses (esp. math, sci., economics, & history). On the whole, and in as much as being able to handle all the responsibilities, I was

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER OF STUDENT
426-11-7687

DATE ENTERED
AUGUST-1976

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
OFFICE OF ADMISSIONS AND RECORDS

NAME
346

DEGREE AND DATE
18

ADDRESS AT TIME OF ADMISSION
2106 DAUGHERTY AVE
TUPELO MS 38801

DATE OF BIRTH
APRIL 24, 1958 N

PARENT, GUARDIAN, OR SPOUSE AND ADDRESS AT TIME OF STUDENT'S ADMISSION
EDMUND J. JAMES SCHOLAR

2106 DAUGHERTY AV
TUPELO MS 38801

HONORS DAY RECOGNITION

HIGH SCHOOL UNITS

ENGLISH	4.5	UNS MATH.		OTHER LANG.		ZOOLOGY		HOME ECON.	
ALGEBRA	2.0	LATIN		U.S. HISTORY	1.0	BOTANY		MISC.	4.5
GEOMETRY	1.0	GERMAN		OTHER HIST.	1.5	BIOLOGY	1.0		
TRIGONOMETRY	.5	FRENCH	2.0	SOC. STUDIES	1.0	GEN. SC.			
SOLID GEOMETRY		SPANISH		PHYSICS	1.0	OTHER SC.	1.0		
CLASSICS	.5	RUSSIAN		CHEMISTRY	1.0	AGRICULT.		MUSIC	

ACCEPTED FROM
TUPELO HIGH SCHOOL
TUPELO
MS 5/76

RANK 1/ 333 99 PCT

COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY CREDITS

Descriptive Title Of Course	Course Number	Credit	Grade	Descriptive Title of Course	Course Number	Credit	Grade
FAA - ARCHITECTURAL STUDIES							
PRINCIPLES OF COMP	RHET 105	4.0*	PASS				
426-11-7687 1ST SEM 1976-77							
INTRO TO ECONOMICS	ECON 101	4.0	A				
PERSPECTIVES IN ASTR	ASTR 100	3.0	A				
WEST CIVILIZ TO 1815	HIST 111	4.0	A				
CALCULUS & ANAL GEOM	MATH 120	5.0	B				
AVE: 16-75-4.688	DEAN'S LIST						
426-11-7687 2ND SEM 1976-77							
HOME & ITS FURNISH	H EC 160	4.0	A				
CONSUMER TEXTILES	H EC 183	3.0	A				
INTRO TO ENVIRON DES	ARCH 101	4.0	A				
INTROD TO PSYCHOLOGY	PSYCH 100	3.0	B				
COND & WEIGHT CONTR	P E 100	1.0	C				
AVE: 15-70-4.667							

JUL 18 1977

IN GOOD STANDING

James R. Payne
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR
FOR RECORDS

KEY TO TRANSCRIPT ON BACK

This information is confidential and should not be released without the student's written consent.

STUDENT: CLASS V MALE #352

EMPLOYER Jamieson Mfg Co

JOB TITLE Sandsaw operator

TENURE _____

Please check the skills which apply to the job position the Tupelo High School graduate holds.

OFFICE WORK *

_____ Dresses neatly
_____ Meets the public well
_____ Has good phone manners
_____ Is a good customer contact
_____ Has required secretarial or clerical skills

GENERAL PERSONAL SUITABILITY *

A Is interested in welfare of employer
A Can express self adequately
E Accepts training well
E Has fundamental control of basic education skills needed for job
A Quality of completed work is acceptable
E Handwriting is legible
E Personality acceptable

Do you think Tupelo High School could have done a better job of educating this student?

Have you any suggestions to improve training of our students?

Indicate E for Excellent
A for Average
U for Unsatisfactory

Jimmy is no longer employed with us, but he was a very good, dependable employee. His capabilities & attitude were excellent!

Mail to:
Mrs James Williamson
1202 Springdale Dr